The Land of Broken Promises

A Stirring Story of the Mexican Revolution

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A story of border Mexico, vivid, intense, such as has never before been written, is this one of American adventurers into the land of manana. Texan, mining engineer, Spanish senor and senorita, peon, Indian, crowd its chapters with clear-cut word pictures of business, adventure and love, against a somber background of wretched armies marching and countermarching across a land racked by revolution and without a savior.

CHAPTER I.

The slow-rolling winter's sun rose coldly, far to the south, riding up from behind the saw-toothed Sierras of Mexico to throw a silvery halo on Gadsden, the border city. A hundred miles of desert lay in its path—a waste of broken ridges, dry arroyos, and sandy plains—and then suddenly, as if by magic, the city rose gleaming in the sun.

It was a big city, for the West, and swarming with traffic and men. Its broad main street, lined with brick buildings and throbbing with automobiles, ran from the railroad straight to the south until, at a line, it stopped short and was lost in the desert.

That line which marked the sudden end of growth and progress was the border of the United States; the desert was Mexico. And the difference was not in the land, but in the government.

As the morning air grew warm and the hoar frost dripped down from the roofs the idlers of the town crept forth, leaving chill lodgings and stale saloons for the street corners and the sun.

Against the dead wall of a big store the Mexicans gathered in shivering groups, their blankets wrapped around their necks and their brown ankles bare to the wind. On another corner a bunch of cowboys stood clannishly aloof, eying the passing crowd for others of their kind.

In this dun stream which flowed under the morning sun there were mining men, with high-laced boots and bulging pockets; graybeards, with the gossip of the town in their cheeks; hoboes, still wearing their eastern caps and still rustling for a quarter to eat on; somber-eyed refugees and soldiers of fortune from Mexico—but idlers all, and each seeking his class and kind.

If any women passed that way they walked fast, looking neither to the right nor to the left; for they, too, being so few, missed their class and kind.

Gadsden had become a city of men, huge-limbed and powerful and with a questing look in their eyes; a city of adventurers gathered from the ends of the world. A common calamity had driven them from their mines and ranches and glutted the town with men, for the war was on in Mexico and from the farthermost corners of Sonora they still came, hot from some new scene of murder and pillage, to add to the general discontent.

As the day wore on the crowd on the bank corner, where the refugees made their stand, changed its complexion, grew big, and stretched far up the street. Men stood in shifting groups, talking, arguing, gazing moodily at those who passed.

Here were hawk-eyed Texas cattlemen, thinking of their scattered herds at Mabahi or El Tigre; mining men, with idle prospects and deserted mines as far south as the Rio Yaqui; millmen, ranchers and men of trades; all driven in from below the line and all chafing at the break. While a hundred petty chiefs stood out against Madero and lived by ransom and loot, they must cool their heels in Gadsden and wait for the end to come.

Into this seething mass of the dispossessed, many of whom had lost a fortune by the war, there came two more, with their faces still drawn and red from hard riding through the cold. They stepped forth from the marble entrance of the big hotel and swung off down the street to see the town.

They walked slowly, gazing into the strange faces in the vague hope of finding some friend; and Gadsden, not to be outdone, looked them over curiously and wondered whence they had come.

The bunch of cowboys, still loitering on the corner, glanced scornfully at the smaller man, who sported a pair of puttees—and then at the big man's feet. Finding them encased in prospector's shoes they stared dumbly at his wind-burned face and muttered among themselves.

He was tall, and broad across the shoulders, with far-seeing blue eyes and a mop of light hair, and he walked on his toes, stiff-legged, swaying from his hips like a man on horseback. The rumble of comment rose up again as he racked past and then a cowboy voice observed:

"I'll bet ye he's a cow-punch!"

The big man looked back at them mockingly out of the corner of his eye and went on without a word.

It is the boast of cowboys that they can tell another puncher at a glance, but they are not alone in this—there are other crafts that leave their mark and other men as shrewd. A group of mining men cong one mog at the smaller man, noting the candle-grease on his corduroys and the intelligence in his eyes; and to them the big man was no more than a laborer—or a shiftless at most—and the little man was one of their kind. Every line in his mobile face spoke of intellect and decision, and as they walked it was he who did the talking while the big man only nodded and smiled.

They took a turn or two up the street, now drifting into some clamorous saloon, now standing at gaze on the sidewalk, and as the drinks began to work, the little man became more and more animated, the big man more and more amiable in his assent and silence.

Then they passed the crowd of refugees they stopped and listened, commenting on the various opinions by an exchange of knowing smiles. An old prospector, white-haired and tanned to a tropic brown, finally turned upon a presumptuous optimist and the little man nodded approvingly as he heard him express his views.

"You can say what you please," the prospector ended, "but I'm going to keep out of that country. I've knowed them Mexicans for thirty years now and I'm telling you they're gitting treacherous. It don't do no good to have your gun with you—they'll shoot you from behind a rock—and if they can't git you that way, they'll knife you in your sleep.

"I've noticed a big change in them paisanos since this war come on. Before Madero made his break they used to be scared of Americans—thought if they killed one of us the rest would cross the border and eat 'em up. What few times they did tackle a white man he generally give a good account of himself, too, and I've traveled them trails for years without hardly knowing what it was to be afraid of anybody; but I tell you it's entirely different over there now."

"Sure! That's right!" spoke up the little man, with spirit. "You're talking more sense than any man on the street. I guess I ought to know—I've been down there and through it all—and it's got so now that you can't trust any of 'em. My pardner and I came clear from the Sierra Madres, riding nights, and we come pretty near knowing—hey, Bud?"

"That's right," observed Bud, the big man, with a reminiscent grin, "I begin to think them fellers would get us, for a while!"

"Mining men?" inquired the old prospector politely.

"Working on a lease," said the little man briefly. "Owher got scared out and let us in on shares. But no more for muh—this will hold me for quite a while, I can tell you!"

"Here, too," agreed the big man, turning to go. "Arizona is good enough for me—come on, Phil!"

"Where to?" The little man drew back half resentfully, and then he changed his mind. "All right," he said, falling into step, "a gin fizz for mine!"

"Not on an empty stomach," admonished his pardner; "you might get lit up and tell somebody all you know. How about something to eat?"

"Good! But where 're you going?"

The big man was leading off down a side street, and once more they came to a halt.

"Jim's place—it's a lunch-counter," he explained laconically. "The hotel's all right, and maybe that was a break fast we got, but I get hungry waiting that way. Gimme a lunch-counter, where I can wrop my legs around a stool and watch the cook turn 'em over. Come on—I been there before."

An expression of pitying tolerance came over the little man's face as he listened to this rhapsody on the quick lunch, but he drew away reluctantly.

"Aw, come on, Bud," he pleaded. "Have a little class! What's the use of winning a stake if you've got to eat at a dog-joint? And besides—say, that was a peach of a girl that waited on us this morning! Did you notice her hair? She was a pippin!"

The big man waggled his hand resignedly and started on his way.

"All right, pardner," he observed; "if that's the deal she's probably looking for you. I'll meet you in the room."

"Aw, come on!" urged the other, but his heart was not in it, and he turned gaily away up the main street.

Left to himself, the big man went on to his lunch-counter, where he ordered oysters, "A dozen in the milk." Then he ordered a beefsteak, to make up for several he had missed, and asked the cook to fry it rare. He was just negotiating for a can of pears that had caught his eye when an old man came in and took the stool beside him, picking up the menu with trembling hand.

"Give me a cup of coffee," he said to the waiter, "and"—he gazed at the bill of fare carefully—"and a roast-beef sandwich. No, just the coffee!" he corrected, and at that Bud gave him a look. He was a small man, shabbily dressed and with scraggy whiskers, and his nose was very red.

"Here," called Bud, coming to an instant conclusion, "give 'im his sandwich; I'll pay for it!"

"All right," answered the waiter, who was no other than Sunny Jim, the proprietor, and, whisking up a sandwich from the sideboard, he set it before the old man who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich apathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old-timer was?"

"What old-timer?" inquired Bud, who had forgotten his brusk benefaction.

"Why, that old feller that you treated to the sandwich."

"Oh—him! Some old drunk around town?" hazarded Bud.

"Well, he's that, too," conceded Sunny Jim, with a smile. "But lemme tell you, pardner, if you had half the rocks that old boy's got you wouldn't need to punch any more cows. That's Henry Kruger, the man that just sold the Cross-Cut mine for fifty thousand cash, and he's got more besides."

"Huh!" grunted Bud, "he sure don't look it! Say, why didn't you put me wise? Now I've got to hunt him up and apologize."

"Oh, that's all right," assured the proprietor; "he won't take any offense. That's just like old Henry—he's kinder queer that way."

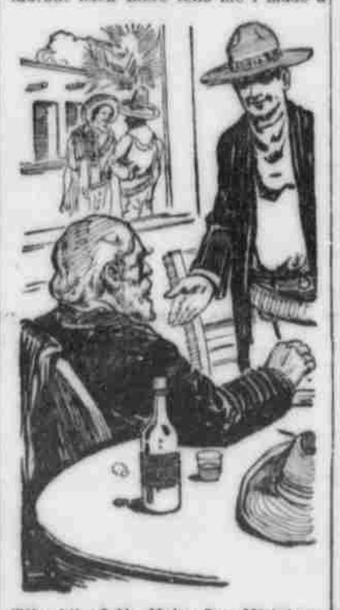
"Well, I'll go and see him, anyway," said Bud. "He might think I was butting in."

And then, going about his duty with philosophical calm, he ambled off, stiff-legged, down the street.

CHAPTER II.

It was not difficult to find Henry Kruger in Gadsden. The barkeepers, those efficient purveyors of information and drinks, knew him as they knew their thumbs, and a casual round of the saloons soon located him in the back room of the Waldorf.

"Say," began Bud, walking bluffly up to him, "the proprietor of that restaurant back there tells me I made a



"We All of Us Make Our Mistakes."

mistake when I insisted on paying for your meal. I just wanted to let you know—"

"Oh, that's all right, young man," returned Old Henry, looking up with a humorous smile; "we all of us make our mistakes. I knowed you didn't mean no offense and so I never took none. Fact is, I liked you all the better for it. This country is getting settled up with a class of people that never give a nickel to nobody. You paid for that meal like it was nothing, and never so much as looked at me. Sit down, sit down—I want to talk to you!"

They sat down by the stove and fell into a friendly conversation in which nothing more was said of the late inadvertence, but when Bud rose to go the old man beckoned him back.

"Hold on," he protested; "don't go off mad. I want to have a talk with you on business. You seem to be a pretty good young fellow—maybe we can make some dicker. What are you looking for in these parts?"

"Well," responded Bud, "some kind of a leasing proposition, I reckon. Me and my pardner just come in from Mexico, over near the Chihuahua line, and we don't hardly know what we do want yet."

"Yes, I've noticed that pardner of yours," remarked Henry Kruger dryly. "He's a great talker. I was listening to you boys out on the street there, having nothing else to do much, and being kinder on the lookout for a man, anyway, and it struck me I liked your line of talk best."

"You're easy satisfied, then," observed Bud, with a grin. "I never said a word hardly."

"That's it," returned Kruger significantly; "this job I've got calls for a man like that."

"Well, Phil's all right," spoke up Bud, with sudden warmth. "We been pardners for two years now and he never give nothing away yet! He talks, but he don't forget himself. And the way he can palaver them Mexicans is a wonder."

"Very likely, very likely," agreed Kruger, and then he sat a while in silence.

"We got a few thousand dollars with us, too," volunteered Bud at last. "I'm a good worker, if that's what you want—and Phil, he's a mining engineer."

"Um-m," grunted Kruger, tugging at his beard, but he did not come out with his proposal.

"I tell you," he said at last. "I'm not doing much talking about this proposition of mine. It's a big thing, and somebody might beat me to it. You know what I am, I guess. I've pulled off some of the biggest deals in this country for a poor man, and I don't make many mistakes—not about mineral, anyway. And when I tell you that this is rich—you're talking with a man that knows."

He fixed his shrewd, blue eyes on the young man's open countenance and waited for him to speak.

"That's right," he continued, as Bud finally nodded non-committally; "she's sure rich. I've had an eye on this proposition for years—just waiting for the right time to come. And now it's come! All I need is the man. It ain't a dangerous undertaking—leastwise I don't think it is—but I got to have somebody I can trust. I'm willing to pay you good wages, or I'll let you in on the deal—but you'll have to go down into Mexico."

"Nothin' doing!" responded Bud with instant decision. "If it's in Arizona I'll talk to you, but no more Mexico for me. I've got something pretty good down there myself, as far as that goes."

"What's the matter?" inquired Kruger, set back by the abrupt refusal; "scared?"

"Yes, I'm scared," admitted Bud, and he challenged the old man with his eyes.

"Must have had a little trouble, then?"

"Well, you might call it that," agreed Bud. "We been on the dodge for a month. A bunch of revoltoses tried to get our treasure, and when we skipped out on 'em they tried to get us."

"Well," continued Kruger, "this proposition of mine is different. You was over in the Sierra Madres, where the natives are bad. These Sonora Mexicans ain't like them Chihuahua fellers—they're Americanized. I'll tell you, if it wasn't that the people would know me I'd go down after this mine myself. The country's perfectly quiet. There's lots of Americans down there yet, and they don't even know there is a revolution. It ain't far from the railroad, you see, and that makes a lot of difference."

He lowered his voice to a confidential whisper as he revealed the approximate locality of his bonanza, but Bud remained unimpressed.

"Yes," he said, "we was near a railroad—the Northwestern—and seemed like them red-flaggers did nothing else but burn bridges and ditch supply trains. When they finally whipped 'em off the whole bunch took to the hills. That's where we got it again."

"Well," argued Kruger, "this railroad of ours is all right, and they run a train over it every day. The concentrator at Fortuna"—he lowered his voice again—"hasn't been shut down a day, and you'll be within fifteen miles of that town. No," he whispered; "I could get a hundred Americans to go in on this tomorrow, as far's the revolution's concerned. It ain't dangerous, but I want somebody I can trust."

"Nope," pronounced Bud, rising ponderously to his feet; "if it was this side the line I'd stay with you till the hair slipped, on anything, but—"

"Well, let's talk it over again some time," urged Kruger, following him along out. "It ain't often I get took with a young feller the way I was with you, and I believe we can make it yet. Where are you staying in town?"

"Up at the Cochise," said Bud. "Come on with me—I told my pardner I'd meet him there."

They turned up the broad main street and passed in through the polished stone portals of the Cochise, a hotel so spacious in its interior and so richly appointed in its furnishings that a New Yorker, waking up there, might easily imagine himself on Fifth avenue.

It was hardly a place to be looked for in the West, and as Bud led the way across the echoing lobby to a pair of stuffed chairs he had a vague feeling of being in church. Stained-glass windows above the winding stairways let in a soft light, and on the towering pillars of marble were emblazoned prickly-pears as an emblem of the West. From the darkened balconies above, half-seen women looked down curiously as they entered, and in the broad lobby below were gathered the prosperous citizens of the land.

There were cattlemen, still wearing their boots and overalls, the better to attend to their shipping; mining men, just as they had come from the hills; and others more elegantly dressed—but they all had a nod for Henry Kruger. He was a man of mark, as Bud could see in a minute; but if he had other business with those who hailed him he let it pass and took out a rank brier pipe, which he puffed while Bud smoked a cigarette.

(Continued Tomorrow Afternoon.)

SESSION MAY LAST UNTIL AFTER MIDNIGHT

Council Has a Lot of Routine and Unfinished Business on Hand; Redlight Ordinance Coming Up.

There is a lot of unfinished business on the city council's hands, and the aldermen face a long session tonight. The lengthy liquor ordinances, over which the old council went thoroughly but put over for the new body to act upon, are to be disposed of, and the mayor's "redlight" ordinance awaits consideration. Councilman Skinner, chairman of the ordinance committee, is expected to report it tonight.

There is a long report from the auditor on the treasurer's and city clerk's books to be taken up, and as it will be the first meeting of the month much routine business is on the cards, including departmental reports and claims. It is probable that some of the business will be put off. If it isn't the city fathers are likely to be in session until after midnight. The auditor's report alone is long enough to consume an ordinary session. The mayor and others who have gone through it say there is nothing of general interest in it, but it embodies suggestions as to municipal bookkeeping and other matters which it is felt make it proper that the council should consider the report from start to finish.

BIRTH RECORD FOR MAY IN ALBUQUERQUE

Twenty-seven births were recorded in Albuquerque in May according to the report of City Physician L. S. Rice, which has been filed with the city clerk, as follows:

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Morijildo Baca, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Chapman, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Claude Stinson, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Christ, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Geo. E. Rossington, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Allen Keller, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Alberto Armijo, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Corliss W. Allard, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Cornelio Sandoval, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Castleman, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Roy L. Kratz, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Vaughn, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Gallagher, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Matthew, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lanza, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. John Fulkenburg, Jr., a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Casmass, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Roy C. Thomas, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Rafael Sais, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Refugio Morales, twin girls.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Gerding, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Ben Vigil, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. William Joy, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Jose Padros, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. F. Joseph Altmix, a boy.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. O. F. Arthur, a girl.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Juan Barela, a boy.